

DEFINITION OF EMERGENCY RESPONSE

What Are “Emergencies”?

Emergencies are incidents that threaten public safety, health and welfare. If severe or prolonged, they can exceed the capacity of first responders, local fire fighters or law enforcement officials. Such incidents range widely in size, location, cause, and effect, but nearly all have an environmental component. To anticipate the variety, consider:

TYPES OF HAZARDS*		
Natural Hazards	Human / Technological	
Atmospheric <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hurricanes, Cyclones ○ Thunderstorms ○ Lightning ○ Hailstorms ○ Tornadoes ○ Windstorms ○ Dust and Sandstorms ○ Avalanches ○ Winter Storms ○ Cold / Exposure ○ Extreme Summer Heat ○ Global weather Geologic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Landslides ○ Mudslides ○ Land Subsidence / Sinkholes ○ Expansive Soils Hydrologic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Floods and Flash Floods ○ Storm Surges ○ Coastal / Rapid Erosion ○ Droughts Seismic and Volcanic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Earthquakes ○ Tsunamis ○ Volcanoes Other Natural Disasters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wildfire ○ Animal / Insect Infestation ○ Disease / Biological (Natural) ○ Natural HAZMAT ○ Material from Space 	Structural Failure / Accident <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dam / Levee Failure ○ Building Collapse ○ Bridge Collapse ○ Tunnel Accident / Fire Fires / Explosions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Building ○ Industrial ○ Residential ○ Health Care ○ Arson ○ Bomb / Explosion Energy / Utility Incidents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fuel Shortage ○ Power Outage ○ Water Shortage ○ Communication Problems ○ Winter Storms ○ Cold / Exposure ○ Extreme Summer Weather Transportation Incidents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Surface Vehicle Accidents ○ Aviation Related Incidents ○ Ships, Boats, Barges, & Ferries ○ Train / Subway Crash ○ Bridge Collapse ○ Tunnel Accident / Fire Hazardous Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HAZMAT / Oil Spills ○ Chemical / WMD ○ Asbestos 	Biological <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Biological WMD ○ Infectious Disease ○ Critters Radiological <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nuclear Accidents ○ Radiological WMD Weapons of Mass Destruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Biological WMD ○ Chemical WMD ○ Radiological WMD Civic Disruption <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hostage ○ Bomb / Explosion ○ Stand-Off ○ Civil Unrest ○ Sabotage ○ Mass Hysteria / Riot Terrorism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General ○ Agro-Terrorism ○ Eco-Terrorism ○ Cyber-Terrorism Violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ at Home ○ at Work ○ at School ○ at Hospital ○ Public Violence Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cyber Attacks ○ Denial of Services ○ E-mail Hoaxes ○ Computer Viruses

*For WWWeb links to information on each kind of hazard, see:
<http://www.usafreedomonline.com/emassist/ema-hzds.htm>

What Are the Elements of Response?

Response is an effort to mitigate the impact of an incident on the public and the environment.

A large or complex incident will require the cooperation of several agencies, and DEM is likely to be among them.

For many emergencies, DEM will play a supporting role in the overall state response.

DEM is likely to lead the state's response if the incident is a

- release of hazardous materials
- oil spill
- wildfire
- epidemic of livestock or zoonotic disease
- pathogenic insect infestation
- failure of a dam

No matter what the challenge or who is in charge, response is likely to address some commonly recognized responsibilities -- "emergency support functions" (ESF – See "Checklist of Emergency Response Issues: Emergency Support Functions for All Hazards).